



Extended Family Newsletter

Issue 16 - March 2013

Here we are with a new issue of the SHM Extended Family Newsletter. The previous issue in November 2011 was the last to be published by Patrick who died in June of 2012. Even during his illness Patrick was talking about having a newsletter out in the summer months but that was not to happen. We know that there is a lot of EF activity going on around the province and we urge you to start/keep sending information and photos so we can all learn about what is happening. You already know from previous communications that Peter Naylor is now producing the EF Newsletter and we are grateful to him for this service. Peter's contact information is at the end of this newsletter.

Remembering Patrick – Sister Moira

Patrick Black sprang into my life shortly after the high of Millennium Year when I was missioned to the RSHM community in Barrow-in-Furness. Barrow and its people took me over with Patrick and Sue among the first to welcome me, encourage me, include me. They shared their deep faith and spirituality with me and for this I will always be grateful.

Patrick was a family man with a great love for Sue and Aidan, Lizzie and Joe. His family came first in his life and he was very proud of them and their achievements. Becoming a grandfather was a proud moment for him too.

Patrick had a great love for the Church and all things liturgical. His choir in Sacred Heart Church in Barrow was second to none and brought the liturgy to life for so many people. Who could not be lifted up by Patrick's interpretation of the Easter Vigil music proclaiming so convincingly 'He is risen Alleluiah'!



Patrick touched many lives as husband, father, musician, friend, reluctant DIY-er! But it is as one of the founder members of the NEP EF that I would like to remember him. From the inauguration of the NEP EF Patrick and Sue brought to the core group a depth of faith, reflection and discernment which helped build a sure foundation for all that is happening today. Patrick took on the editorship of the EF newsletter and managed to encourage or cajole so many people to contribute. Even some of our EF from the Americas who joined with NEP EF in Béziers a number of years ago were inspired to contribute.

Patrick often referred to 'the Béziers experience' with great enthusiasm and gratitude. The RSHM motherhouse and all those he met there opened him even more to the man Gailhac whose charisma Patrick admired greatly and wanted to make known to others.

In the last few months of his life Patrick was deeply aware of how much he was loved by Sue and family. Also how much he was loved by his RSHM friends and EF. He was moved by so many who were in touch with him and praying for him.

Patrick was aware of his great physical weakness towards the end of his life. This was in stark contrast to the strength of his belief and conviction that God was present to him in all his diminishment.

Thank you Patrick for all you were and are to us who miss you so much. 'May we meet merrily in heaven'.

Trafficking: The Modern Day Slavery - Upminster, 24th May 2012

“The Olympics are not bringing just sport to London, but, as with all major international events, the tragedy of human suffering will be present in the form of SEX FOR SALE”

This is how we presented the subject of Trafficking.

To heighten our awareness of the enormity of this problem we invited Sr Pat Kenny, Sister of Charity to speak to a gathering of Extended Family members and parishioners in Upminster on May 24th 2012. Pat is her congregation’s representative dealing with Trafficking, and has wide International experience being a member of Trac, Unamina and Renate. Pat gave us a well informed presentation, highlighting the problem on our doorstep.

Extended Family Gathering In Noddfa, 28th-30th September 2012

The Gathering was to be one of reflection and prayer with the theme “The Journey Continues”. There were two main presentations, which were the basis for reflection and prayer:

“A walk through Beziers with Fr Gailhac”: Sr. André presented the early history of the foundation of the RSHM Institute. Sr. André also explained the ‘charism’ of Fr Gailhac and the ways in which this was turned into real, practical actions that have spread throughout the world.

‘The Spirituality of Fr. Gailhac’: Sr. Margaret Fielding inspired us with aspects of Gailhac’s spirituality including his being centred in Jesus Christ and nourished and guided by the Word of God. She gave questions for silent reflection and prayer following her presentation, before a time for sharing in small groups on each one’s favourite passage from Scripture.

It was interesting to experience the diversity of the Scripture readings that people had chosen and to hear why it was important to them. This session certainly drew people together. In a feedback session on this sharing a common theme that emerged was that people wanted to take this activity back to their parishes, because they felt that they had got so much from it.



There was an informative session on what had been done in each Extended Family local area over the last year. Everybody was keen to listen and learn how other groups had been working and what real-life actions they had been taking to develop the RSHM mission in their community.

Eileen and Peter Silvester (members of the Core Group) spoke about the mission of the Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary and also introduced us to a ritual that the Carlisle Extended Family has used so that their members can make a formal commitment to work with the Sisters and support their mission.

At the end of the day we had a vigil mass for Sunday, when the whole community came together in the slate-walled chapel to celebrate the Eucharist with a local priest presiding.

Our weekend of prayer and reflection was also one in which we enjoyed each other’s company and the

beautiful setting of Noddfa. 'Thinking time' was a good excuse to get out into the bright sunshine and



to be alone to walk in the grounds to mull things over. After dinner on Saturday, people congregated in the 'meeting room' and an impromptu entertainment session kicked off. There was an amazing amount of talent in the room that kept us entertained for almost two hours.



On Sunday morning we were set a challenging question "In light of what you have heard during the weekend: What steps do you think you can take in your local area to move forward on your journey as Extended Family?" We considered this question in our local groups and came up with some practical steps that we could take in the near future to make the Extended Family better known and to get more people involved in it. Afterwards it was a time for listening and learning as good ideas emerged from each group alongside some common themes for the continuing journey.



Then it was time for our final meal together followed by our thanks and good byes to all the people with whom we had spent our weekend. It had been a formative experience and we've met people that we hope to meet again and work with as members of the Extended Family.

(From John Newby's account of the EF Gathering in Noddfa)

Extended Family At RSHM Provincial Chapter, 26th -28th October 2012

Hearts Burning Within Us As We Journey

This was the theme of the RSHM Provincial Chapter of the Northern European Province held in Birmingham during the weekend of 26th-29th October. It was a privileged time when the sisters reflected, discerned and shared on their life and mission.

Six members of the Extended Family Core Group were present. In their presentation as part of the

Extended Family report they focused on the SHM Extended Family movement being a GIFT from God to enable Fr. Gailhac's vision to be more widely known & lived. They unwrapped this gift, using visual aids to emphasize its main components: RSHM Charism, History, Roots, Extending the Vision, Shared Spirituality, Mutual Support, Collaboration on Justice Issues, Moving into the Future in Response to God's Call.



Kath Nolan and Eileen and Peter Silvester shared briefly on what being Extended Family meant for them. Their presence and contributions were enriching, and were appreciated by all.

It was evident that the presentation by these EF members touched many RSHM who were visibly moved by the powerful words of Kath, Eileen and Peter. This affirmation of the RSHM charism and its power to inspire EF members showed how much the Extended Family movement has grown and developed in the Northern European Province in the years since the last provincial chapter.

Kath wrote this after the Chapter:

As a member of the Core Team for the Extended Family for the Northern Province, I attended the recent RSHM Provincial Chapter in October, held in Birmingham.

Some years ago I was invited to attend an Extended Family meeting at Seafield Convent in Crosby, Liverpool and found not only a very warm welcome, but also a great passion from all the Sisters in following their mission from Gailhac to "Give life to all". From then, I have attended numerous meetings in various communities and have deepened my own knowledge of the vision Gailhac had and raised my own awareness of justice issues like trafficking and asylum seekers. Prayer is always an essential part of these meetings and I know that my own spirituality has developed, particularly when I have prepared and led the prayer myself.



The Chapter opened my eyes even further to the reality of the work of the Sisters. I was not fully aware of the full range of ministries, and all the countries and communities they serve. Many projects include marginalized groups who have very complex problems, but the Sisters respond to God's call to "love your neighbour". I was impressed with the very detailed Finance report which showed a very realistic approach in forward planning.

Although some concern was raised about the age profile of the members of the Province, I certainly witnessed a great energy and desire to succeed and a real love for the mission of Gailhac.

Castlemilk Celebration, 13th November 2012

Greetings from Scotland!

On 13th November the friends of the sisters met at their home for a lovely, happy evening together. The evening was very wet and windy and so the warm meal we were greeted with on arrival was the perfect beginning. Between 20 & 30 people were there that night and there was no shortage of chatter during the meal. The group prayed and reflected together and this was followed by a very lively "singalong." We all enjoyed being together and celebrating Founder's Day with the sisters.



Lisburn Celebration, 21st November 2012

Our thoughts were very much with the journey of the first ten sisters' arrival in Lisburn on 22nd November 1870. They had set out from Béziers on 13th November, travelling via Bordeaux, Liverpool and Belfast. The final part of the journey was by train to Lisburn where they were met by Father Kelly and continued their journey by open carriages to Castle Street.



A group of past pupils joined us on the 21st for reflection, prayer and sharing photographs. All were very aware of the hardships endured by the first sisters and the struggles of the early days. There were many happy and grateful memories. Photographs were exchanged and wonder was expressed at what standards were achieved over the years with so few resources. A lovely tea of sandwiches, cakes and apple tarts was shared and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The prospect of a return visit was hopefully in the offing.

Lisburn Celebration, 30th November 2012

A group gathered again on November 30th to celebrate the anniversary and also for reflection and prayer. (See over for photos)



Upminster Advent Prayer Service - 6th December 2012

On Thursday 6th December 2012 the Upminster SHM Extended Family gathered in our chapel for a service of reflection and prayer in preparation for Christmas. The decision to have this service came from our meeting in Noddfa in September.

The theme of our reflection was "Taking Christ's Coming Seriously". We reflected on the living God and his presence in our lives.

The shepherds were the first to find the Christ child; God gave them the sign of a great light revealed directly in the silence of the night. And they, the first to know, were able to discern its significance. Because they worked in the night and could not escape the silence, they were drawn into contemplation. They recognized the signs of the dying darkness as it gave way to the first signs of dawn, they hurried to see "the thing that had taken place" and seeing they believed.

Do I take Christ's coming seriously?
Does contemplation form a large part of my prayer?
Do I accept that silence is an indispensable quality for hearing God's messages?

God does not come as one who conquers or as one who dominates but as one who knocks and waits.

Do I take the birth of Christ within me seriously?
What good is it to me
If this eternal birth of the Divine Son
Takes place unceasingly
But does not take place within myself?

What good is it to me
If Mary is full of grace
And I am not also full of grace?

What good is it to me
For the creator to give birth to the Son
If I do not also give birth to him
In my time and my culture?

This then, is the fullness of time;
When the Son of God is begotten
In us

(Meister Eckhard OP)

Could you contribute an item to the newsletter? Photos and articles – no matter how short – are always welcome and will be held for the next available newsletter. Don't delay - exercise your literary talents now!

Electronic copy by email or as an attachment is preferable (the editor is a terrible typist) - as are digital photos - but handwritten copy and prints are just as welcome. See below for the email and postal addresses.

E-mail: efnewsletter@outlook.com
Post: 12 Huntsman Lane, Carlisle, CA1 3TQ, UK